

Message Text

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51

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

----- 071082

O R 211700Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4264

SECSDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USSAG NKP

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 14245

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, CB

SUBJECT: BRASS TRAFFICKING

REF: PHNOM PENH 14227/PR 211050Z DEC 73

1. FOLLOWING CHMEDTC'S INTERVIEW THIS AFTERNOON DEC 21 WITH NEWSWEEK CORRESPONDENT BECKER (REFTEL), HE AND I WENT TO SEE LON NOL TO ALERT HIM THAT THE BRASS TRAFFICKING STORY WAS ABOUT TO BREAK, AND THAT FURTHER DECISIVE AND IMMEDIATE ACTION BY HIM IS NOW NECESSARY TO PREVENT A DAMAGING SCANDAL IN U.S. AND IN CAMBODIA.

2. CHMEDTC DETAILED THE DOCUMENTATION BECKER HAD PUT TOGETHER, STRESSING THAT DEFENSE MINISTER MAJOR GENERAL THAPPANA NGINN IS IMPLICATED BY HER STORY, AND EMPHASIZING THE COMPLETENESS AND APPARENT AUTHORITATIVENESS OF HER EVIDENCE.

3. WE THEN ASKED LON NOL TO TAKE SIX ACTIONS NO LATER THAN TOMORROW, DEC 22. THESE WERE:

(A) ISSUED A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE SPECIFICS OF INVESTIAGION ORDRRED WHEN INFORMATION WAS RECEIVED THAT BRASS TRAFFICKING APPEARED TO BE UNDERWAY; PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION IN DETIAL, TO INCLUDE NAMES OF PERSONS ACCUSED
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AND ARRESTED OR RELIEVED OF THEIR DUTIES; LIST THE GKR AND FANK ACTIONS TAKEN IN DETAIL TO INCLUDE OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS; AND, STATE THAT THE GKR WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE THIS MATTER BY EVERY MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL.

(B) CONFISCATE ALL BRASS IN PRIVATE HANDS OVER THE WEEKEND AND TURN OVER TO MEDTC FOR DISPOSAL.

(C) TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO BRING TO JUSTICE THOSE ARRESTED OR RELIEVED ALREADY.

(D) APPREHEND OR RELIEVE OTHER ACCUSED TRAFFICKERS.

(E) ENFORCE THE EXISTING ORDERS OF FANK BEARING ON THIS SUBJECT AND INSURE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CUSTOMS, AND POLICE ARE ALERT AND TAKE ACTION REQUIRED.

(F) APPOINT AN OFFICER TO CONTROL BRASS IN PHNOM PENH AND IN EACH MILITARY REGION WITH FULL AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH BOTH THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SIDES OF THE GOVERNMENT.

3. LON NOL CONVOKED IMMEDIATELY FANK CINC MAJOR GENERAL SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, FANK J-2 COLONEL KIM ENG KOURODETH, AND THAPPANA NGINN. ONLY THE TWO FORMER APPEARED, BOTH IN SHORT ORDER. LON NOL GAVE THEM INSTRUCTIONS PER POINTS (A) THROUGH (F) IN PARA TWO ABOVE AND ADDED TWO INJUNCTIONS OF HIS OWN:

(A) THAT J-2 COLONEL KOURODETH WAS TO PREPARE PHOTOSHZND DOCUMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION FOR DISPLAY TO THE PULBIC AND TO THE PRESS; AND,

(B) MAJOR GENERAL THAPPANA NGINN WAS TO MEET WITH CORRESPONDENT BECKER TO CLARIFY HIS ROLE IN THE SITUATION. MAJOR GENERAL SOSTHENE WAS CHARGED BY THE MARSHAL WITH PASSING THIS INFORMATION TO MAJOR GENERAL THAPPANA NGINN.

4. COMMENT. SOSTHENE IS TO CHECK THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT STATEMENT WITH CHMEDTC TOMORROW, DEC 22, AND WE WILL FOLLOW UP IN AN EFFORT TO INSURE THAT THE ACTIONS REQUIRED ARE IN FACT TAKEN. AT THIS STAGE, LON NOL APPEARS TO BE COOPERATING FULLY, AS DOES SOSTHENE.
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IF THEY CONTINUE TO REACT ENERGETICALLY, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO PREEMPT THE PRESS STORY BECKER IS FILING, AND ALSO TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH A SERIOUS SCANDAL INVOLVING MANY, AND PRHAPS SOME LEADING MILITARY FIGURES. STORY ALSO MAY GIVE US THE LEVERAGE NOT NOLY TO CONTAIN BUT LARGELY TO CLOSE OUT THE BRASS TRAFFICKING HERE.

5. WILL REPORT TOMORROW ON GKR FOLLOW-UP.
ENDERS

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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